



LESSONS LEARNED RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Project Title and Code:				
LL-03 – U.S. Perceptions and Responses to Corruption in Afghanistan				
Interview Title:				
Interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)				
Interview Code:				
LL-03				
Date/Time:				
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)				
Location:				
Washington, DC				
Purpose:				
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)				
Interviewees: (Either list interviewees below, attach sign-in sheet to this document or hyperlink to a file)				
SIGAR Attendees:				
Brittany Gates (Research Analyst) and Kate Bateman (Senior Analyst)				
Sourcing Conditions (On the Record/On Background/etc.): On the Record (For part of the interview)				
Recorded:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recording File Record Number (if recorded):				
Prepared By: (Name, title and date)				
Brittany Gates, Research Analyst, April 26, 2016				
Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)				
Key Topics:				
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(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

[REDACTED]



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(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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So what is our goal? Defeat al Qaeda at all times? Or defeat them with the legitimacy of the Afghan state? At the Embassy, it is a political decision. With the military, it's a regional decision. They would payoff to local leaders to not fight them and would turn away when local leaders grow poppy. Yea of course you want to do it, but you have to legitimize the government i.e. anti-corruption. If you actually see what we did on the ground, it was opposite objectives. There was consistency at the NSC, but what about on the ground? Sound banking procedures and paying the foot soldiers, while lowering our military [personnel]. In supporting the Afghan units, we were complicit in building a parallel police force because our central goal was counter-narcotics/counter-terrorism. They would ask ISAF, how do I know what I'm supposed to get paid as a cop? We got everyone working on the police force in one room (INL, ISAF, and DEA). These agencies would pay 95% of salaries and provided training but couldn't answer those questions. The Institution of the MOI was not being supported however the different pieces within MOI were supported though.

We would ask the military and non-AID: What do you mean the government is committed to taking over the police, and the response would be that they [the Afghans] signed a letter. That's all that mattered. USAID hardly settled for that, we want operational proof. We would ask if it is commitment or skillset necessary. Building them up, takes many years. But it starts with a policy [to address the] inconsistency and incoherence. Getting down to the ways and means is where you start differing and the bickering happens. How can you say your against corruption when you throwing out money to a government that didn't have the oversight/checks and balances? With a bottleneck, you can't put that much money into that small of a place. You need to have _____. It's not about the money. It's about being strategic and political.

For those of us on the ground, we have to be clearer and specific on what we can do. It's something we can't predict. Or we can but there are consequences. That happened a lot under Holbrooke. He wanted to get it done now; but the only way we could do it was through a grant not a contract. Requirements can be put into contracts,



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not into grants. Grants have no oversight mechanism. It's a legal "we trust you" agreement. That only works if you can answer the "so what" question. Is there a change? Is there accountability? Does it happen? How many recommendations from these organization get acted upon? The rank and file technical advisors at USAID have the best sense of absorptive capacity, not the political leaders.

Project Design Process

You have to budget out what it is going to take. Then set a goal. To do this [a project], I need those type of things and would then come up with a number. Now numbers are political-based with deciding the budget and then figuring out what we need. We do it backwards.

Leverage and Conditioning Assistance

Doing leverage would change the nature of our policy objectives and we were not prepared to do that. We are concerned with defeating ISIS at all costs by aligning and we shifted from anti-Taliban to anti-al Qaeda so we could start tolerating the Taliban. Conditioning Assistance, doesn't work. Are we prepared to not blink? If I say "if you don't do this, I won't give you \$20 million." Day zero when we started talking about this I said it's not going to work unless we are willing to live up to our conditions. No way will we give up our political HOO/4A project by taking away \$20 million. The money got "repurposed" and stayed in Afghanistan. It comes down to who wants it more? When it is appropriated, we should recognize and affirm that it will be used for conditions and if not met, will not return to the area. The base is \$2 billion even though \$1 billion returns to the Treasury. Next year is based on the previous year's appropriation not on what was returned.

Recommendations

Don't mistake purposeful corruption with lack of skill. You need to have a policy structure and skillset. The hardest part is the political will in the country. Did they have the policy structure to carry it out? Did they have the skillset to carry it out? That has to be a part of an assistance program and there has to be a primordial interest more than just let's kill off the bad guy. It has to be not paying money to a community leader to tell us where the bad guys are. Next comes the political will. Now, we are bribing for the political will. That has to be structured and conditionalized. The government can then decide that it's too conditional. So its politicized conditions. Then the SIGARs come around asking what everyone is thinking. So then we measure what these people want for what we need. Which is why conditionality doesn't work. The World Bank has measurement and standards, we don't need to settle anything different.